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NATIONAL HONOR AND PEACE

By LOUIS BROIDO

NATIONAL HONOR AND VITAL INTERESTS

By RUSSELL WEISMAN

PRIZE ORATIONS OF THE INTERCOLLEGIATE PEACE ASSOCIATION

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NATIONAL HONOR AND PEACE[1]

By Louis Broido, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Since the dawn of history the teachers, thinkers, and prophets of mankind have prayed and labored for the abolition of war. In the process of the centuries, their hope has become the aspiration of the mass of men. Growing slowly, as do all movements for righteousness, the cause of peace first claimed the attention of the world in the year 1899, when Nicholas of Russia called the nations together to discuss ways and means for the arbitration of international differences and for the abolition of war. From that day on, the movement for peace has progressed by leaps and bounds, and to-day it has reached the highest point of its development.

Already nations have signed treaties to arbitrate many of their differences. Holland, Denmark, Argentina, and Chile have agreed to arbitrate every dispute. But these nations are not potent enough in world affairs for their action to have an international influence. It remains for the great powers like England, France, Germany, and the United States to agree to submit every difficulty to arbitration, and thus take the step that will result in the practical abolition of war.

If one would find the reasons that thus far have kept the great powers from agreeing to submit *all* differences to arbitration, his search need not be long nor difficult. The Peace Conference of 1907 reports that the objections to international arbitration have dwindled to four. Of these objections the one commonly considered of most weight is this: "We will not submit to arbitration questions involving our national honor." Even so recently as the spring of 1912, our own Senate refused to give its assent to President Taft's proposed treaties with France and England to arbitrate all differences, and refused on the ground that "we cannot agree to arbitrate questions involving our national honor." This is the statement that you and I as workers for peace are constantly called upon to refute.

Let us, therefore, consider what honor is. For centuries honor was maintained and justice determined among men by a strong arm

[1] First Prize Oration in the North Atlantic Group and Second Prize in the National Contest held at Mohonk Lake, May 28, 1914.

and a skillfully used weapon. It mattered not that often the guilty won and the dishonorable succeeded. Death was the arbiter, honor was appeased, and men were satisfied. But with the growth of civilization there slowly came to man the consciousness that honor can be maintained only by use of reason and justice administered only in the light of truth. Then private settlement of quarrels practically ceased; trial by combat was abolished; and men learned that real honor lies in the graceful and manly acceptance of decisions rendered by impartial judges.

As men have risen to higher ideals of honor in their relations with one another, so nations have risen to a higher standard in international affairs. Centuries ago tyrants ruled and waged war on any pretext; now before rulers rush to arms, they stop to count the cost. Nations once thought it honorable to use poisoned bullets and similar means of destruction; a growing humanitarianism has compelled them to abandon such practices. At one time captives were killed outright; there was a higher conception of honor when they were forced into slavery; now the quickening sense of universal sympathy compels belligerent nations to treat prisoners of war humanely and to exchange them at the close of the conflict. At one time neutrals were not protected; now their rights are generally recognized. A few hundred years ago arbitration was almost unknown; in the last century more than six hundred cases were settled by peaceful means.

During the last quarter of a century we have caught a glimpse of a new national honor. It is the belief that battle and bloodshed, except for the immediate defense of hearth and home, is a blot on the 'scutcheon of any nation. It is the creed of modern men who rise in their majesty and say: "We will not stain our country's honor with the bloodshed of war. God-given life is too dear. The forces of vice, evil, and disease are challenging us to marshal our strength and give them battle. There is too much good waiting to be done, too much suffering waiting to be appeased, for us to waste the life-blood of our fathers and sons on the field of useless battle. Here do we stand. We believe we are right. With faith in our belief we throw ourselves upon the altar of truth. Let heaven-born justice decide." Here is honor unsmirched, untainted! Here is pride unhumbled! Here is patriotism that is all-embracing, that makes us so zealous for real honor that we turn from the horrors of war to combat the evils that lie at our very doors.

We know that faith in such national honor will abolish war. We

know, too, that men will have war only so long as they want war. If this be true, then, just as soon as you and I, in whose hands the final decision for or against war must ever rest, express through the force of an irresistible public opinion the doctrine that our conception of national honor demands the arbitration of every dispute, just so soon will our legislators free themselves from financial dictators and liberate the country from the dominance of a false conception of national honor.

Do you say this ideal is impractical? History proves that questions of the utmost importance can be peacefully settled without the loss of honor. The Casa Blanca dispute between France and Germany, the Venezuela question, the North Atlantic Fisheries case, the Alabama claims—these are proof indisputable that questions of honor may be successfully arbitrated. "Does not this magnificent achievement," says Carl Schurz of the Alabama settlement, "form one of the most glorious pages of the common history of England and America? Truly, the two great nations that accomplished this need not be afraid of unadjustable questions of honor in the future."

In the face of such splendid examples, how meaningless is the doctrine of the enemies of peace: "We will not arbitrate questions of national honor. We will decide for ourselves what is right and for that right we will stand, even if this course plunges us into the maelstrom of war. We will not allow our country to be dishonored by any other." Well has Andrew Carnegie expressed the modern view: "Our country cannot be dishonored by any other country, or by all the powers combined. It is impossible. All honor wounds are self-inflicted. We alone can dishonor ourselves or our country." One sure way of doing so is to insist upon the unlawful and unjust demand that we sit as judges in our own case, instead of agreeing to abide by the decision of a court or a tribunal. We are told that this is the stand of a weakling, that progress demands the fighting spirit. We, too, demand the fighting spirit; but we condemn the military spirit. We are told that strong men fight for honor. We answer with Mrs. Mead: "Justice and honor are larger words than peace, and if fighting would enable us to get justice and maintain honor, I would fight! But it is not that way!" For it is impossible to maintain honor by recourse to arms; right may fall before might, and, viewed in the light of its awful cost, even victory is defeat. In the words of Nicholas Murray Butler: "To argue that a nation's honor must be defended by the blood of its citizens, if need be, is quite meaningless,

for any nation, though profoundly right in its contention, might be defeated at the hands of a superior force exerted in behalf of an unjust and unrighteous cause. What becomes of national honor then?"

Too long have we been fighting windmills; we must struggle with ourselves; we must conquer the passions that have blinded our reason. We have been enrolled in the army of thoughtlessness; the time has come to enroll in the army of God. We have followed a false ideal of honor; we must disillusion ourselves and the world. If men declare that the preservation of courage and manliness demand that we fight, let us lead them to the fight, not against each other, but against all that is unrighteous and undesirable in our national life. Men still cling to an ancient conception of national honor; let us convince them that there is a newer and higher conception. Men still declare that peace is the dream of the poet and prophet; let us prove by historical example that questions, even of national honor, can be happily settled by arbitration. If men despair, let us remind them that to-day, as never before, the mass of men are slowly and surely working out God's plan for this great cause.

The day of triumph is not far distant. Already the moving finger of Time paints on the wide horizon, in the roseate tints of the dawn, the picture of Peace—Peace, the victory of victories, beside which Marathon and Gettysburg pale into insignificance; victory without the strains of martial music, unaccompanied by the sob of widowed and orphaned; victory on God's battlefield in humanity's war on war.

NATIONAL HONOR AND VITAL INTERESTS[2]

By Russell Weisman, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio

The day for deprecating in general terms the evils of war and of extolling the glories of peace is past. Such argument is little needed. International trade requires peace. International finance dictates peace. Even armies and navies are now justified primarily as agents of peace. Yet so wantonly are these agents looting the world's treasuries that they are themselves forcing their own displacement by courts of arbitration. The two hundred and fifty disputes successfully arbitrated in the past century challenge with trumpet-tongued eloquence the support of all men for reason's peaceful rule. To-day no discussion is needed to show that if war is to be abolished, if navies are to dwindle and armies diminish, if there is to be a federation of the world, it must come through treaties of arbitration. In this way alone lies peace; yet in this way lies the present great barrier to further progress—the conception which many nations, especially the United States, hold of "national honor and vital interests." The reservation from arbitration of so-called matters of national honor and vital interests constitutes the weak link in every existing arbitration treaty between the great powers of the world. This reservation furnishes the big-navy men all the argument they need. It destroys the binding power of the treaties by allowing either party to any dispute to refuse arbitration. It was by this reservation that the United States Senate so lately killed the British and the French treaties. And I contend here to-night that the one subject which imperatively demands discussion is national honor and vital interests. That the next important step must be the exposure of the reactionary influence of the United States in excepting these matters from arbitration.

Only fifteen months ago President Taft made his memorable declaration that this barrier ought to be removed from the pathway of

[2] First Prize Oration in the Eastern Group Contest, 1912, and Second Prize in the National Contest held at Mohonk Lake, May 16, 1912.

peace. He proposed that the United States negotiate new treaties to abide by the adjudication of courts in every international issue which could not be settled by negotiation, whether involving honor or territory or money. The next morning the proposal was heralded by the press throughout the world. A few days later the halls of Parliament resounded with applause when Great Britain's secretary of state for foreign affairs announced that his government would welcome such a treaty with the United States. France soon followed. Then, to the surprise of all, hesitating Germany and cautious Japan showed a like willingness to enter into such agreements. Universal peace seemed all but realized.

The cause was at once borne up on a mighty wave of public opinion. The peace societies were in a frenzy of activity. Mass meetings of indorsement were held in England and America. Editorials of approval appeared in all parts of the world. The movement was now irresistible. Within eight months the British and the French treaties were drafted. Three of the greatest nations of the world were at last to commit themselves unreservedly to the cause of international peace. Even disputes involving national honor should not halt the beneficent work of high courts of law and of reason. The day when the treaties were signed, August 3, 1911, was hailed as a red-letter day in the annals of the civilized world. It was proclaimed the dawn of a new and auspicious era in the affairs of men and of nations.

During all the months preceding the action of the Senate on these treaties the only statesman of any prominence to raise his voice in opposition was ex-President Theodore Roosevelt. The gist of his successive and violent attacks on the treaties is contained in this utterance, which I quote, "It would be not merely foolish but wicked for us as a nation to agree to arbitrate any dispute that affects our vital interests or our independence or our honor." In this spirit, to the surprise and disappointment of the whole nation, the Senate amended the treaties out of their original intent, and placed upon them limitations that defeated their purpose. By the Senate's action the United States is still committed to the pretense that there may be occasion for a just and solemn war, that vital interests and national honor may force us to fight.

What, then, are the vital interests that can be conserved only by saber and bullet? Nothing more, nothing less, according to various acknowledged authorities, than a state's independence and its territorial integrity. Did the keen mind of our former president really

foresee the seizure of some of our territory by England or France? Yet he protests that it would be "not merely foolish but wicked for us as a nation to agree to arbitrate any dispute that affects our vital interests." Did Senator Lodge and his threescore colleagues who amended the treaties actually fear an attempt to overthrow our form of government, to destroy our political institutions, or to take away those individual rights and sacred privileges upon which our government was founded? Yet to save us from such fate they refused unlimited arbitration.

For the United States to except from arbitration her vital interests is obvious pretense. To add thereto her national honor is extreme hypocrisy. What is national honor? No man knows. It is one thing to-day; another, to-morrow. It may involve an indemnity claim, a boundary line, a fisheries dispute. In fact, any controversy may be declared by either party, at will, to be a question of national honor. Thus in the hands of an unskilled or malicious diplomacy, any question which was originally a judicial one may become a question of national honor. What, then, will we arbitrate? Every case in which a favorable award is assured us. If we want Texas, we send an army after it. Every case that does not rouse our anger. Let the *Maine* blow up and we fight. A treaty with an elastic exception like this is a farcical sham and a delusion.

It is high time the true and humiliating significance of these fearsome phrases should be as familiar to every taxpayer as is the burden of bristling camps and restless navies. Read the record of Great Britain's first offer of unlimited arbitration in the Olney-Pauncefote treaty of 1897. There, too, you will find national honor and vital interests clogging the machinery of universal peace. By these same exceptions the Senate emasculated that treaty and defeated the spirit of the agreement. Is it conceivable that the Senate actually feared that our interests would be imperiled by that treaty? Did it delve out some hidden dangers which escaped the careful scrutiny of both the English and American embassies, some peril unforeseen by the keen judicial mind of President Cleveland, who characterized the defeat of the treaty as "the greatest grief" of his administration?

But this is not all. The American representatives at both Hague Conferences were the first to place these same limitations on all arbitration proposals.

Look at it from what point of view you will, our government's conduct must appear humiliating. Considering the fact that

universal arbitration treaties have proved practical, it is well-nigh incredible. Behold our bellicose sister American republics. Argentina and Chile, Brazil and Argentina, Bolivia and Peru, all have agreements for the arbitration of all questions whatsoever. All the Central American republics are bound by treaty to decide every difference of whatever nature in the Central American Court of Justice. Denmark's three treaties with Italy, Portugal, and the Netherlands withhold no cause, however vital, from reason's peaceful sway. Norway and Sweden likewise have an agreement to abide by the decision of the Hague Court in whatever disputes may occur. The very existence of all these treaties is significant, yet even more significant is the fact that they have been triumphantly tested. Norway and Sweden at one extremity of the globe and Argentina and Chile at the other have thus quietly settled disputes in which their honor and interests were seriously involved.

Do you ask further evidence of the hypocrisy with which our Senate parades our national honor and our vital interests to the undoing of a grand work? Search our history and you will find it in abundance. In the great case of the Alabama claims, Charles Francis Adams pronounced the construction of Confederate ships in English ports to be a violation of the international law of neutrality. This certainly was a question of national honor and vital interests, yet he pleaded for arbitration. In reply Lord John Russell said, "That is a question of honor which we will never arbitrate, for England's honor cannot be made the subject of arbitration." The case was debated for six years. Then came England's "Grand Old Man," the mighty Gladstone, with a different view. "It is to the interest," he said, "not only of England and the United States, but of the world, peaceably to settle those claims." He submitted them to a joint high commission. England lost and paid. Thus the honor of both nations was successfully arbitrated. Likewise the Newfoundland fisheries case had been a bone of contention between Great Britain and America from the day our independence was recognized. As late as 1887 it threatened to become the cause of war. No question ever arose which more vitally affected the interests of America, yet the Senate recently accepted a settlement by arbitration. Similarly, the Alaska fur seal dispute, the Alaskan and the Venezuelan boundary disputes, and the northeast boundary controversy all involved both the vital interests and the national honor of England and America, yet all were satisfactorily and permanently arbitrated. So

excited were we over our northwest boundary that the principal issue of a political campaign was "The whole of Oregon or none! Fifty-four forty or fight!" Yet we peaceably acquiesced in a treaty that gave us neither.

Yes, our honor may be arbitrated. If we are ill-prepared for war, we arbitrate. If we are sure of a favorable award, we arbitrate. But we must have a loophole, an ever-ready escape from obligation. Posing as the most enlightened nation on the face of the globe, we refuse entirely to displace those medieval notions according to which personal honor found its best protection in the dueling pistol, and national honor its only vindication in slaughter and devastation. To unlimited arbitration we refuse to submit.

Fifteen years ago England, the mighty England, gave us her pledge that no cause should ever justify war. This pledge our Senate in the name of honor refused. Unlimited arbitration agreements were suggested at both Hague Conferences. Americans promptly placed restrictions upon them in the name of honor. Again has England with enthusiasm just offered us unrestricted arbitration. Again she is repulsed by our Senate in the name of honor. France, too, bears to our doors an unqualified pledge of arbitration. France, too, is repulsed by our Senate in the name of honor. Germany and Japan express a desire to settle every question at the bar of justice. Impelled by honor we pass their desire unheeded. Our Clevelands, our Olneys, our Edward Everett Hales, our Carl Schurzes, our John Hays, have all urged unlimited arbitration. Our Davises and Clarks and Platts and Quays in Senate seats have undone their work in the name of honor. Our Charles Eliots and Nicholas Butlers, our Albert Shaws and Hamilton Holts, now plead for universal peace through unlimited arbitration. Senators Bacon and Lodge and Heyburn and Hitchcock, apparently impelled by constitutional prerogative, party prejudice, or personal animosity, now cast their votes for limitations in the name of honor. From the platform of peace conferences, from the halls of colleges, from the pulpit and the bench, from the offices of bankers and merchants and manufacturers, from the press, with scarcely a column's exception, there arises a swelling plea for treaties of arbitration that know no exceptions. In the name of honor that plea is defied.

Honor? No, an ocean of exception large enough to float any number of battleships for which pride and ambition may be willing to pay! Honor? No, a finical and foolish reservation that at any

moment may become a maelstrom of suspicion and rage and hatred and destruction and death! Honor? No, a mountainous barrier to peace that must be leveled before there can be progress! Honor? No, the incarnation of selfishness, the cloak of shrewd politics, the mask of false patriotism! National honor? No, national dishonor!

Before the nations of the world the United States stands to-day in an unenviable light. It is a false light. Since the days of William Penn and Benjamin Franklin our people have led in much of the march upward from the slough of weltering strife. Many a stumbling block to progress we have removed from the rugged pathway, but for fifteen years our government has refused to touch the barrier of national honor and vital interests. England and France have now laid this duty squarely at our door. "It is a social obligation as imperative as the law of Moses, as full of hope as the Great Physician's healing touch." Let us here highly resolve that there shall be uttered a new official interpretation of national honor and vital interests, an interpretation synonymous with dignity and fidelity, sincerity, and integrity, and confidence in the vows both of men and of nations. "If we have 'faith in the right as God gives us to see the right,' we shall catch a vision of opportunity that shall fire the soul with a spirit of service which the darkness of night shall not arrest, which the course of the day shall not weary."

NOTE.—The orations upon "National Honor and Peace" and "National Honor and Vital Interests," published in the present pamphlet, are two of the fifteen Prize Orations of the Intercollegiate Peace Association, published together in a little volume by the World Peace Foundation. A complete list of the orations included in this noteworthy collection is given on another page, and the range and interest of these subjects will deeply impress all readers with the immense importance of the work now being done by our college and university students in this great field. The two orations republished in this pamphlet are chosen for this special purpose because they present two different treatments of essentially the same important subject. The Intercollegiate Peace Association is only ten years old; but its history, the deep interest which it has aroused in multitudes of college students, the remarkable excellence of the hundreds of essays which they have prepared, and the broad expansion of the work which we are now witnessing, constitute one of the most promising factors in the whole movement of peace education at this time. It is from our colleges and universities that our leaders of public opinion, our statesmen and scholars, our lawyers and editors, our preachers and teachers, most largely come; and the present impressive growth of devotion to the peace cause among students is something to be profoundly grateful for. All who have that high cause at heart are urged to read and widely circulate the volume prepared by the Intercollegiate Peace Association.